

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 0890

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SUBJ: SOUTHERN SUDAN REGIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS AND NEW OFFICERS

REF: KHARTOUM 777

1. GENERAL JOSEPH LAGU, MILITARY COMMANDER OF SOUTHERN SUDAN REBELS UNTIL ADDIS PEACE AGREEMENT IN 1972, HAS BECOME CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF SOUTHERN SUDAN, THAT IS, PRESIDENT OF HIGHER EXECUTIVE COUNCIL THERE. MOST RECENTLY HE HAS BEEN COMMANDER FIRST (SOUTHERN) DIVISION, SUDAN ARMY. SUDAN SOCIALIST UNION MEMBERS OF REGIONAL ASSEMBLY MET IN CAUCUS FEBRUARY 27 TO CONSIDER LAGU'S NOMINATION AND TO HEAR INCUMBENT ABEL ALIER WITHDRAW HIS RE-NOMINATION ON ORDERS FROM NIMEIRI. MOST NEWLY ELECTED ASSEMBLY MEMBERS BELONG TO SSU ONLY BECAUSE MOST HAD FORESIGHT TO JOIN BEFORE ELECTION CAMPAIGN WHICH SSU, AS SOLE LEGAL PARTY, AUPERVISED AND MANAGED. SINCE ELECTION RESULTS WERE IN GENERAL DEFEAT FOR INCUMBENTS AND VICTORY FOR EX-REBELS WHO RETURNED FROM EXILE, PRISON OR RETIREMENT DURING 1977 AMNESTY PROGRAM, LAGU'S ELECTION WAS FOREGONE
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CONCLUSION ALTHOUGH FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT ABUL GASSIM WHO PRE-SIDED AT CAUCUS ALLEGEDLY SPENT FIRST DAY IN JUBA IN PERSUADING ABEL ALIER TO STEP DOWN GRACEFULLY.

2. REGIONAL ASSEMBLY IN JUBA IS LEGISLATURE FOR SIX SOUTHERN PROVINCES AND WAS ESTABLISHED AS RESULT 1972 ADDIS ABABA ACCORD WHICH ENDED LONG CIVIL WAR. SOUTH IS ONLY REGION IN SUDAN WITH SUCH SELF-GOVERNMENT.

NEW SOUTHERN ASSEMBLY HAS MEMBERSHIP OF 110, INCLUDING 60 GEOGRAPHIC CONSTITUENCIES AND 44 SEATS ALLOTTED FOR WOMEN, YOUTH, FARMERS, WORKERS, CAPITALISTS, AND SO FORTH. REMAINING SIX SEATS ARE ELECTED BY SIX PROVINCIAL COUNCILS. OUTGOING ASSEMBLY, FIRST EVER, HAD ONLY 60 SEATS IN TOTAL AND PRESIDED OVER PRACTICALLY INERT REGION SINCE 1973. SOUTHERN SUDANESE ARE ALSO PROPORTIONALLY REPRESENTED IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

3. JOSEPH LAGU AND NEWLY ELECTED MEMBERS OF ASSEMBLY REPRESENT SOUTHERNERS WHO FOUGHT WAR AGAINST KHARTOUM GOVERNMENT. ABEL ALIER AND INCUMBENTS, LOYALISTS DURING WAR, DID NOT ALLOW EX-REBELS TO JOIN SOUTHERN GOVERNMENT AFTER 1972 PEACE, EXCEPT THAT MANY REBEL SOLDIERS WERE INCORPORATED INTO SUDANESE ARMY AND LAGU WAS GIVEN COMMAND OF ARMY UNITS IN SOUTH. PETER ODOHO, CLEMENT MBORO AND OTHER FAMOUS REBELS WON ELECTIONS. SOUTHERN ASSEMBLY SPEAKER HILARY LOGALI LOST. JOKE IN KHARTOUM THAT NEXT SPEAKER OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SHOULD BE COMMISSIONER OF PRISONS BECAUSE SO MANY OF "HIS GRADUATES" WERE ELECTED APPLIES WITH EQUAL APTNESS TO SOUTH. CAMPAIGN ACCUSATION OF GENERAL INCOMPETENCE OF ALIER'S GOVERNMENT WAS GIVEN SPECIAL MEANING FRO VOTERS ON FEBRUARY 13 WHEN CIVIL SERVANTS IN JUBA DEMONSTRATED IN PROTEST AFTER MISSING SEVERAL PAYCHECKS. CURFEW HAD TO BE IMPOSED ON JUBA DURING LAST DAYS OF VOTING PERIOD WHICH LASTED TWO WEEKS BECAUSE OF POOR COMMUNICATIONS IN AREA.

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4. NEW SOUTHERN ASSEMBLY WILL BE LESS DOCILE, MORE SOUTHERN-ORIENTED AND PROBABLY MORE COMPETENT. LAGU WILL HAVE HANDS FULL AS LEADER OF SELF-WILLED EX-REBELS WHO BARELY COOPERATED AT HEIGHT OF CIVIL WAR IN FACE OF COMMON ENEMY. GENERAL THEME OF NEW ASSEMBLY IS THAT OUSTED INCUMBENTS FAILED TO GET SOUTHERN REGION OFF DEAD CENTER, THAT WAR IS OVER BUT RECONSTRUCTION HAS HARDLY STARTED BECAUSE ALIER'S GOVERNMENT LACKED INFLUENCE AND RESPECT IN KHARTOUM. SOUTH NEEDS FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM NATIONAL GOVERNMENT BUT BELIEVES NATIONAL UNITY ONLY MEANS SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT AT LEAST UNTIL SOUTH "CATCHES UP". MORE AGGRESSIVE SOUTHERN ASSEMBLY WILL BE OUT TO SHOW METTLE. BERGUS

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